

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 ACDA-05 OMB-01 DHA-02

ORM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /080 W

----- 076397

R 101745Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1114

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UV, ML

SUBJ: MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

1. THE "PERMANENT" BORDER COMMISSION, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED MANY YEARS AGO TO DELINEATE THE BORDER BETWEEN MALI AND UPPER VOLTA, IS PRESENTLY MEETING AT KOLOKO NEAR THE BORDER BETWEEN BOBO DIOULASSO AND SIKASSO. THE VOLTAN DELEGATION IS HEADED BY MAJOR SOME, THE NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND SECURITY, WHILE THE HEAD OF THE MALIAN DELEGATION IS LT. COL KOUKARA, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND SECURITY.

2. THE MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER COMMISSION HAS NOT MET SINCE SEPTEMBER 1974. AT THAT TIME, THE THEN VOLTAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR, CAPTAIN BAMBARA, WHO WAS NOTED FOR HIS LACK OF TACK AND FINESSE, WAS ALLEGED TO HAVE USED LANGUAGE DURING THE DISCUSSIONS

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WHICH HAD INFURIATED DOUKARA. IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED IN OUA-

GADOUGOU THAT THE SUBSEQUENT AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY MALI WHICH LED TO THE BORDER INCIDENTS OF DECEMBER 1974, WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE SEPTEMBER 1974 MEETING OF THE BORDER COMMISSION.

3. ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCE, THE TIME IS NOW RIPE TO SETTLE ONCE AND FOR ALL THE MALI/UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE ON THE BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE LAST YEAR BY THE LOME MEDIATION COMMISSION. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTEDLY CONTEMPLATED THAT, OF FIVE VILLAGES LOCATED ON THE BORDER, ONE WOULD GO TO MALI AND THE FOUR OTHERS WOULD REMAIN IN UPPER VOLTA. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA IS ANXIOUS TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE VOLTAN ARMY AND RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE ALL THE VETERANS WHO WERE MOBLIZED IN DECEMBER 1974. SINCE MAJOR SOME AND LT. COL DOUKARA ARE OLD FRIENDS (THEY WERE CLASSMATES AT THE FRENCH MILITARY SCHOOL IN FREJUS), THE CHANCES OF AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT APPEAR TO BE REASONABLY GOOD. GRAHAM

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